Godl
825·8
Tre/Off
98054

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY-1.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 05 October, 2018

THE OFFICE

OF THE

HISTORICAL PROFESSOR.

THE

OFFICE OF THE HISTORICAL PROFESSOR

98054

An Inaugural Lecture

READ IN THE MUSEUM AT OXFORD

OCTOBER 15, 1884

BY

EDWARD A. FREEMAN, M.A., HON. D.C.L., LL.D.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY
FELLOW OF ORIEL COLLEGE
HONORARY FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE

London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
1884

[*All rights reserved*]

00098054

INAUGURAL LECTURE.

In coming forward for the first time, as I do to-day, to fulfil the new duties which the highest power in the land has laid upon me, I cannot forget how soon my first words necessarily come after the last words of the renowned scholar in whose place I find myself. It is indeed matter of rejoicing for us all that his last words were last words only in an official sense. Our guide is taken from us, and yet not wholly taken from us. Called to other and higher duties, we feel sure that he will not forget the studies of his earlier life; we feel sure that he will still be ready, from time to time, to stretch out a helping hand to those whose main work still lies in the fields where his own once lay. And readiest of all, I would fain hope, he will be to stretch forth a hand to him who feels it his highest honour to stand

in his place, and to stand in it, I may make bold to say, with his good will and something more. And yet the fact in which we all rejoice that he in whose place I stand still lives and flourishes does but in some sort heighten the natural difficulties of my first appearance before you. I am thereby driven into more direct comparison than I otherwise might have been with one with whom comparison is indeed dangerous. You have to hear my inaugural professions, while what I may call the exaugural confessions of the Bishop of Chester have as yet hardly passed from your ears. Let me only hope that, if I ever have the same privilege as he had, of parting from you, hardly, like him, to new duties, but when the time may come for me to lay all official duties aside, I may be able to make as good a confession as he made. I would fain hope that, when the time comes, I may part from you with as cheerful a confidence as his, that I may, like him, feel that I have at least done my best, and that you—or those who may then represent you

here—have at least accepted the will, perhaps even, as in his case, the deed also.

There is one point of difference, whether I am to count it as a difference for gain or loss, between him who now speaks and him who spoke last in the same character, which comes strongly home to me when I am tempted to glance, as he did, at the history of the post in which I am called to succeed him. As a rule, the younger succeeds the elder. It is by a rather singular lot that I am called on to take the place which has been held in succession by two living men, by two personal friends, by two of the men of whom among all living men I think most highly, but to neither of whom can I look up with that particular form of reverence which we feel towards our elders and official teachers. Of the last two holders of this chair, the latter is certainly younger than I am by a few years, as even the former is by a few days. And this fact, a disadvantage truly in many ways, is no small advantage when I come to look back at times before either of them was

called to it. My academic memory goes back further than that of the Bishop of Chester, and I cannot mourn that it does so. There can be but few here who can remember, as I can, listening to lectures from a Regius Professor of Modern History more than two-and-forty years ago. But those whose memory carries them so far back will assuredly not have forgotten the time when they listened to the voice of Arnold. Of that great teacher of historic truth, that greater teacher of moral right, I can speak as one wholly free from local, traditional, or personal bias. I was not one of his pupils or of his followers. I never spoke to him; I never heard him speak save with his official voice in the well-filled Theatre. And yet I am bound to honour him as a master in a sense in which I can honour no other. On one side I have learned more from him than I have learned even from my Right Reverend predecessor. For of Arnold I learned what history is and how it should be studied. It is with a special thrill of feeling that I remember that the chair which

I hold is his chair, that I venture to hope that my work in that chair may be in some sort, at whatever distance, to go on waging a strife which he began to wage. It was from him that I learned a lesson, to set forth which, in season and out of season, I have taken as the true work of my life. It was from Arnold that I first learned the truth which ought to be the centre and life of all our historic studies, the truth of the Unity of History. If I am sent hither for any special object, it is, I hold, to proclaim that truth, but to proclaim it, not as my own thought, but as the thought of my great master. It is a responsibility indeed to be the successor, even after so many years, of one who united so many gifts. New light has been thrown on many things since his day; but it surely ill becomes any man of our time who, by climbing on Arnold's shoulders, has learned to see further than Arnold himself could see, to throw the slightest shade of scorn upon so venerable a name. Surely never did any man put forth truths so high and deep in words so artlessly and

yet so happily chosen. If he were nothing more than the teller of a tale in the English tongue, he would take his place as one who has told a stirring tale as few could tell it. It was something to make us quiver at the awful vision of Hannibal, and to show us Marcellus lying dead on the nameless hill. It was a higher calling to show, as no other has shown, that history is a moral lesson. In every page of his story Arnold stands forth as the righteous judge, who, untaught by the more scientific historical philosophy of later days, still looked on crime as no less black because it was successful, and who could acknowledge the rights even of the weak against the strong. But more than all for my immediate purpose, Arnold was the man who taught that the political history of the world should be read as a single whole, who taught that the true life of the tale, the true profit of the teaching, should not be made void and of none effect by meaningless and unnatural divisions. It was he who taught us that what, in his own words, is "falsely called ancient history," is in

truth the most truly modern, the most truly living, the most rich in practical lessons for every succeeding age. From him I learned that teaching; it will be my highest aim, in the place in which I am now set, to hand that teaching on to others. If I can do ought to break down the middle wall of partition that is against us—if I can do ought to make men feel more deeply that so-called "ancient" history without "modern" is a foundation useless for lack of a superstructure, that so-called "modern" history without "ancient" is a superstructure ready to fall for lack of a foundation—if I can bring home to men's minds that the patriarchs of our own folk, the Angul and Dan of the old legend, the mythical representatives of our speech, our laws, our whole historic being, are as such the equal brethren of Hellên and Latinus—if I can bring but one of you to work, as I have ever worked, with the kindred records side by side, with the fates of one branch of the house ever called in to throw the needful light on the fates of the other branch—if I can bring but one

to trace out with me the work of Kleisthenês, of Licinius, of Simon of Montfort, as parts of one living whole, a whole of which every stage needs to be grasped by the same faculties, to be studied by the same methods—then indeed I shall have done the work that I have come to do; but I shall have done it only as the loyal follower of the master who being dead yet speaketh, if only by the mouth of a distant successor.

I have paid my homage where homage from a holder of this chair is due chiefest and first of all. But there are others, others of whom I have already spoken, of whom, living though they are, I still feel that I have not yet said all that is their due. Arnold was taken from us too soon, taken in the fulness of his strength, when he had indeed done much, but when much more, above all in this place, might have been looked for from him. He was lost to us; but worthy successors were in time to fill his place. Again, after a season, his chair passed to a memorable man. It passed to one who had indeed drunk in

the spirit of Arnold, to one who knew, as few have known, to grasp the truth that history is but past politics and that politics are but present history. It passed to a scholar, a thinker, a master of the English tongue, to one too who is something nobler still, to one whom we may fairly call a prophet of righteousness. The name of Goldwin Smith is honoured in two hemispheres, honoured as his name should be who never feared the face of man, wherever there was truth to be asserted or wrong to be denounced. He went forth from us of his own will; but it was but to carry his light to another branch of our own folk, and it may be more graceful in us, if we do not so much regret our own loss as congratulate the kindred lands to which he is gone. And in absence he yet teaches us; some truths have perhaps become clearer to him on the other side of Ocean than they could ever have been in our elder world. Not the least among his many services to truth and to right reason has been done within this very year. He has taught us, in one of those

flitting papers which, when they come from him, speak volumes, where to look for the true Expansion of England. His keen eye has seen it, not in the spread of "empire," but in the spread of that which is the opposite to empire—not in the mere widening of dominion—an Eastern despot could do that—but in that higher calling which free England in the later world has shared with free Hellas in the elder. He has taught us the meaning of words, the realities of things; he has taught us to see, if not a "Greater Britain," yet a newer England, in the growth of new lands of Englishmen, new homes of the tongue and law of England, lands which have become more truly colonies of the English folk because they have ceased to be provinces of the British Crown.

And one more tribute, not the last, I feel sure, by many, to him in whose immediate place I stand, my predecessor in the University and in one college, my successor in early days in another. In those early days I may, I think, fairly claim that I was the first to grasp more fully than others

all that was in him, to see in him something more than the clever men whom we meet with daily, to pick him out as one with whom his first class and his fellowship were not the ending but the beginning of his career. It seems not so many years since I was often asked, sometimes by men who deemed themselves specially learned, who this Stubbs might be of whom I talked so much but of whom nobody else had heard. No one will ask that now of the historian of the English Constitution, the enlightening spirit of the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission, and beyond all these, the man who has drawn the life-like portrait of Henry the Second, and who has thereby shown that he has a call before other men to draw a life-like portrait of Henry the Eighth. I have had in my life the honour and advantage of knowing not a few wise and learned men, some who have passed away from us, some who are still among us. Among them two stand forth before all others; one of my own time of life, the other of an older generation; one an intimate

friend of many years, the other a master at whose feet I deemed it a privilege to sit now and then as a humble listener. To those two I can honestly pay a special tribute which I can hardly pay to any other. Among many of whom I have learned, those two, the late Bishop of Saint David's and the present Bishop of Chester, Connop Thirlwall and William Stubbs, stand forth as the two from whom one might always learn without any need to doubt or stumble at what one learned of them. Others may know how to tell a more popular tale, others may indulge in more brilliant feats of the imagination; of none other can I say, as I can say of each of them, that his minute accuracy never fails and his impartial judgement never swerves. In a long and careful study of the Bishop of Chester's writings, I will not say that I have always agreed with every inference that he has drawn from his evidence; but I can say that I have never found a flaw in the statement of his evidence. If I have now and then lighted on something that looked like oversight,

I have always found in the end that the oversight was mine and not his. After five-and-thirty years' knowledge of him and his works, I can say without fear that he is the one man among living scholars to whom one may most freely go as to an oracle, that we may feel more sure with him than with any other that in his answer we carry away words of truth which he must be rash indeed who calls in question.

Standing then in the place of such men as these, of predecessors whom we have not wholly lost but to whom I can still look as friends and fellow-workers, I feel the responsibility, the burthen of my new office the more keenly. It is no small matter, at an age when the best part of one's days is gone, to be carried away to a wholly new manner of life, to begin a career at a time when one who had begun it earlier might fairly think of withdrawing from it. To that work then I am the more bound to give the fulness of such powers as I have because I am likely to have a shorter time than others to do

it in. In such a post as mine, each man will have his own way of doing things, and he will do his work the better, if he does it in his own way, the way which his own nature and his own studies lead him to. In this case, in defiance of Aristotle and Aristotle's teacher, I venture to think that there may be more good ways than one. I feel sure that my two illustrious predecessors must have done their work, each admirably, but in utterly different ways. And I feel sure that each of them did his work the better for doing it in his own way, and not trying to follow the way of some other man. To them, as well as to our teachers of past days, I may apply the words which Cicero applies to the great orators whom he followed—"omnes inter se dissimiles fuerunt, sed ita tamen ut neminem sui velis esse dissimilem[1]." And I trust it is not presumptuous in me to say that I feel sure that my way of doing the work will also be different from that of any who have gone before me, and moreover

[1] De Oratore, iii. 7.

that I shall do that work all the better if I do it in my own way and do not try to copy the way of any of those who have gone before me. I need not tell you that I come back to the University after many years, and those years full of great changes. I need not say that much in the present teaching and administration of this place is altogether new and strange to me. Of its examinations I once knew something, but even then I found the course of change to be so fast that, each time that I was appointed Examiner, I had to learn my trade afresh; my experience from the former time had already become a matter of ancient history. Of teaching in the strict sense, in the University or out of it, I have had no experience whatever, unless any one chooses to count two terms' possession, eight-and-thirty years back, of a lowly office in my own college, an office which the progress of reform has since swept away. In the art of preparing—I will not use the ugly word cramming—an undergraduate for his class or for his pass the last

bachelor who has won his own class or his own pass is necessarily more skilful than I am. But I do not feel that my lack of experience of this kind is necessarily a disadvantage; every man has his own line of duty, and it seems to me, strange as I believe the doctrine will sound in some ears, that to prepare men for examinations is no part of the duty of a Professor in such a subject as mine. Duties he has, and no small ones; but they are, as I hold, duties of quite another kind from even the widest and most liberal form of teaching into which the thought of success or failure in an examination is ever allowed to enter.

There is surely a certain lurking fallacy in the word "Professor." The name surely means wholly different things according to the subjects to which it is applied. It surely implies a different relation to the Professor's subject, according to the nature of that subject, or rather perhaps according to the position of that subject among the studies of the University. When

a subject, for whatever cause, is studied by a few only, when the Professor is perhaps the only teacher of the subject in the University, I should conceive that, while it is his duty to stand forth as a representative of the highest learning in his subject, it must also be his duty to bend himself, if need be, to the humblest form of its teaching. A Professor of Arabic, while master of a mighty literature from which I daily mourn that I am shut out, must also, I imagine, be ready to teach the Arabic alphabet, even, if need be, to a brother-professor. No such duty lies on a professor of that which is alike the oldest and the newest speech of European freedom; none such lies on a professor of the undying tongue of Empire, the tongue of the consuls, the Cæsars, and the pontiffs. A professor of Greek must, I assume, be master alike of every stage and every phase of that still living speech, from the song of Homer to the song of Rhêgas, from the prose of Hekataios to the prose of Trikoupês. A professor

of Latin, I assume, must be alike at home in every page of the long life of the Imperial tongue, from the song of the Arval Brethren to the hymns of Bernard of Clairvaux, from the sharp sayings exchanged between Nævius and the Metelli to those yet more memorable Saturnians in which the nameless poet of the thirteenth century set forth the earliest platform of Parliamentary Reform. Nay, it might hardly be unreasonable if we even asked him to begin a fresh journey from the oath of Strassburg, if we called on him to trace the fates of the children as well as of the parent, to trace them even to the most wayward shapes which the speech of Latium has put on by the springs of the Rhine or by the mouths of the Danube. Each alike, he who represents Greek and he who represents Latin, is surely set in his place to be the representative of the widest and the deepest, the oldest and the newest, learning that can bear on the history of the undying tongue that forms his subject. But they are spared

the lowlier duties which I conceive that a professor of Arabic or Chinese must combine with a learning no less deep and wide of the tongue that forms his subject. And so, I take it, it must be with the professor of every subject which has many followers in this place and of which there are many teachers besides himself. If I may so far magnify an office in which I am myself a sharer, I would say that a professor of any of the great branches of study in this place should hold a place something like that which the prince held in the view of Tiberius Cæsar[1]. The prince was not called on to discharge the duties of an ædile, a prætor, or a consul; so the Professor is not called on to discharge the duties of a college tutor or a private tutor. "Majus aliquid et excelsius a professore postulatur." His business is, not to make men qualified for classes and fellowships, but to be the representative of that to which classes and fellowships, if they are not to be wholly useless and mischievous, are simply

[1] Tac. Ann. iii. 53.

means. His place is to be the representative of learning. He should stand ready to be the helper, if need be, to be the guide, of any, old or young, be they freshmen or be they doctors, who, in days like these, between the frenzy of amusements and the frenzy of examinations, can still find a few stray hours to seek learning for its own sake. But before all other classes he will welcome the younger graduates, those who have already learned something, but who still have much to learn, and among them he will specially welcome those who have undertaken the work of teaching in his own subject. He and they are alike teachers, though teachers of different kinds, and his experience in the art of teaching himself may make him of some use to them in the art of teaching others. But his own calling is different from theirs. He must be ready, in set discourses, to show forth whatever, in his own researches or in the researches of others, he may deem most fitting to suggest thoughts as well as to supply facts to his hearers. But he

will not confine himself to this more easy, more showy, perhaps both to himself and to his hearers more taking work. He must not forget the most solid business of his calling. He must ever bear in mind himself, and he must ever strive to impress on the minds of others, that the most ingenious and the most eloquent of modern historical discourses can after all be nothing more than a comment on a text. All that he can say of his own thinking, even all that the newest German book can tell him, will after all be but illustrations of those original authorities without a sound and thorough knowledge of whose texts all our finest talk is but shadow without substance. To the law and to the testimony, to the charter and to the chronicle, to the abiding records of each succeeding age, writ on the parchment or graven on the stone—it is to these that he must go himself and must guide others. He must himself toil, and as far as in him lies, he must constrain or beguile others to toil with him, at that patient study of contemporary texts, of contem-

porary monuments, which to some minds seems a good deal less taking than the piling together of theories to be upset the next day by some other theory. He must work to lay the foundation; when the foundation is once laid on the rock of original research, a superstructure may be raised on it which may live through a good many blasts and storms of controversy. But he who without a foundation builds on the sands of theory, he who rushes at a difficult and controversial period with no knowledge of the periods that went before it or of the periods that came after it, he who conceives of events, not as they are reported by those who saw them, but as may be convenient for some favourite doctrine, political or theological, philosophical or artistic—against such as these our professor will hardly need to raise his voice of warning. He may spare himself the task; he may leave events to take their course; the house built on the sand will presently crumble of itself, without needing any special blasts and storms to sweep it away.

It is, as you will see, a somewhat lofty standard that I have formed to myself of the professor's office. But it is only by aiming at the highest standard of all, at a standard which may be far above our reach, that we shall ever attain to the highest standard that is within our reach. In other words, the professor should be one who has at least striven to be a master in that branch of knowledge which he is called on to represent, and he should be ready to devote himself heart and soul to the advancement of knowledge, of knowledge in the highest sense, in that branch. If he is not thus qualified, intellectually and morally, he is not fit to be professor at all. If he is thus qualified, he is surely fit to judge for himself how he can best promote the interests of that branch of knowledge. It is therefore surely a mistake to lay down a code of hard and unbending rules, not only for professors of this or that subject, but for all professors of all subjects. I cannot but think that my idea of a professor must be widely different from the idea which seems to have been

entertained by the last reformers of the University. I can speak the more freely on this head, because the last reform was not a reform of our own making, but a reform which was thrust upon us from outside. I had passed my life in the belief that an University ought to be, before all things, a seat of learning, or, if the word be liked better, a seat of research. And I had thought that for some years past the great object of reformers had been to make learning or research less difficult, perhaps even to make it, in a meaner sense, less unprofitable to its followers. Whoever dictated the ordinances of the last set of Commissioners must have thought otherwise. It is indeed hard to believe that the object of the Commission really was to do all that could be done for the hindrance of learning and for the humiliation of its official representatives. But, if such had been their objects, no one could have denied that they had adapted means to ends very skilfully. The ordinance seems to look on a professor, not as a representative of

learning, but as a mere teacher, as an usher, I might say, an usher too of a low moral standard, who will be likely to shirk his work unless he is bound down to it by minute and rigid rules. Nothing surely can be more likely than this to hinder the professor from giving full play to whatever powers he may have, nothing more likely to make him look on his work as a task and to keep him back from throwing himself into it heart and soul. It is, or lately was, the fashion to mock at the old founders of colleges for making strict and unbending statutes to control the discipline and manner of life of their members. Yet here, as the last instalment of reform, as the newest developement of enlightenment, we have a set of professorial ordinances, ordinances almost as minute as the statutes of any founder of past ages, designed for the guidance, not of lads and their immediate teachers, but for men who, if they are not masters of the several branches of learning, are altogether out of their places. For a man who is what a professor ought to be, what I am

sure that not a few of the professors in this place are, it is not exactly encouraging to tell him that he must give so many lectures at such and such times, that he must announce them beforehand at such and such times, that he must hold himself responsible to one Board and that he must take counsel with another. Will the members of the Boards forgive me if I tell them that as yet I feel towards them much as Apollônios of Tyana felt when he had never seen a tyrant, when he did not know how many heads a tyrant had, or what kinds of necks and teeth those heads might be furnished with[1]? But I am told that the Boards are much less terrible in real life than they seem in the bristling language of the ordinance. The good sense, no doubt, of their members hinders them from really being such thorns in the professor's side as it would seem that the authors of the ordinance meant them to be. But neither professor nor board can wipe out the ordinance, with all its petty and grotesque re-

[1] Philostratos, Life of Apollônios, iv. 37.

strictions. Till some deliverer from outside steps in to undo the work of the invader from outside, we must bear our yoke as we can.

An Oxford professor then in these days must work in fetters, but he may still work. And a professor of what is called "Modern History" may feel himself bound by fetters which seem to be more firmly rivetted than those of any of his brethren. I need not tell you—I have already told you in this lecture—that I acknowledge no such distinction as that which is implied in the words "ancient" and "modern" history, "ancient" and "modern" languages, and the like. In the course of a life divided about equally between what are called "ancient" and what are called "modern" studies, I have never been able to find out the difference between the two. I have never been able to find out by my own wit when "ancient" history ends and when "modern" history begins. And when I have asked others, when I have searched into the writings of others, I have found so little

agreement on the point that I have been myself none the wiser. A living friend once told me that modern history begins with the French Revolution, and I fancy that a good many people, at least in France, would gladly agree with his doctrine. On the other hand, Baron Bunsen held that modern history began with the Call of Abraham. These, I think, are the two extremes; but I have heard a good many intermediate points suggested. Those perhaps are wisest who decline to define at all; only the thought will follow that it might be wiser still not to draw a distinction which cannot be defined. At any rate the University has never ruled the point. In all the controversies of five-and-thirty years ago I never could get a definition of modern history. More than all, even the last set of Commissioners have not taken on them to define it. Even those who are so minute as to rule that the Professor of Modern History is to give exactly forty-two lectures in a year — they do not say how they propose to compel him to

give forty-two good lectures—even they do not undertake to tell him what he is to lecture about. They tell him to lecture in "some part of modern history;" but they do not tell him what "modern history" is. It is surely open to him to accept either of the definitions which I have quoted. I should, I conceive, be strictly keeping within the four corners of the ordinance if I were to begin with the battle of four kings against five, or again if I were to decline to touch any matter older than A.D. 1789. In short out of the very abundance of the Professor's fetters comes his means of escape. As to my subjects, at least I am free. But let no one fear that, because I am free, I am likely to make any raids on the domains of other professors of which they might reasonably complain. It is one of the dearest wishes of my heart to see this vain distinction where no real distinction is utterly wiped away from the legislation of the University of Oxford, or even to see such promising approaches towards wiping it away

which have been actually made in the University of Cambridge. At Cambridge there is now a tripo where, at the bidding of common sense, in the in terest of sound learning, it is possible to take u Thucydides and Lambert of Herzfeld side by side All honour then to our illustrious sister, and ma we soon have the wisdom to follow in the trac which she has opened. I will not at present ente with any fulness on a subject on which I trus to have other opportunities of speaking at greate detail. But I cannot help pointing out, now at th very beginning, that this unnatural division int "ancient" and "modern" hinders the great centra fact of European history, the growth and th abiding of the power of Rome, from being ever se forth in all the fulness of its unity. The strang confusions which prevail in many minds with re gard to the Empire in East and West, the utte blank which the whole subject is in many minds come largely of this piecemeal way of looking a things which are simple enough if looked at as a whole, but which are utterly meaningless when

this and that fragment of the story is looked at apart from its fellows. No man can ever understand how truly the last Constantine was the successor of the first, how truly again the last Francis was the successor of the first Charles, unless he has fully taken in in what sense and through what stages Charles and Constantine alike had stepped into the place of Gaius Julius Cæsar Octavianus, consul, tribune, and pontiff of the commonwealth of Rome. Or, look at the history of one of the noblest of the provinces of that commonwealth, of that illustrious island whose story is one of its brilliant times so closely interwoven with our own, look at Sicily, the meeting-place of the nations, the battle-field of creeds and races, where the strife between Aryan and Semitic man has been since fought out in all its fulness. That wonderful cycle of events loses all its historic life, if we look at one fragment of it only; the strife with the Phœnician and the strife with the Saracen each loses half its meaning if either is parted from the other; Timoleôn cannot hold his full historic

place apart from Roger, nor can Roger hold his place apart from Timoleôn. But the mischief of this unnatural division where no real division is, is not confined to any one of the subjects of University study; it affects our whole system to its very centre. We in the nineteenth century are called on to do a work of the same kind as that which was wrought by the scholars of the sixteenth century. They brought to light a new learning, a learning which seemed like the discovery of an elder world. We have to put all worlds and all learning, old and new, past and present, into their due relations towards one another. The sixteenth century found out the life and value of certain stages of the history and the languages of Greece and Italy; it is for the nineteenth to put those stages into their due relation to other stages in the history and the languages both of those lands and of other lands. The question is one which does not touch the study of political history only; it touches no less the study of language and the study of art. We

need here no "modern school," no "modern side;" we need no school of so-called "modern" languages apart from "ancient," we need no chair of so-called "classical" archæology apart from the archæology of other times. The warning that is now needed is a general one, and one which closely touches the very existence of Oxford or of any other University as a seat either of really sound learning or of really liberal teaching. Those studies which are the truest foundation of all studies, studies without which we may as well shut up our halls and schools and lecture-rooms altogether, studies which are misapplied only when it is forgotten that they are only the foundation and not the whole building, are daily threatened, daily mocked at, it may be by men who, as has been happily said, sometimes dissemble, it may be by the ignorant and presumptuous who deem themselves philosophers, and who even come to be so deemed by others. We ought to be ready with our answer to the gainsayers, and, if we think good, we may make ourselves ready with it. But we

shall never be ready with it as long as we remain deaf to the teaching of the great discoveries of the age, as long as we take no heed to the new life thrown on all knowledge by the comparative method, as long in short as we obstinately part asunder "ancient" and "modern" history, "ancient" and "modern" languages. We are told over and over again that the time is wasted which we spend on the teaching of what are called "dead" languages, that the time is wasted which we spend on the political communities of small physical extent in ages which are far distant. Cavils like these are indeed only the cavils of ignorance and shallowness, but, as the world goes at present, they are cavils which need a practical answer. And our answer will never be so practical as it might be as long as we give an advantage to the enemy by keeping up these artificial barriers. We all, I trust, agree in holding that there are no tongues more truly living, no tongues which even now more deeply influence the speech and thoughts of men, than those older

forms of the still abiding tongues of Greece and Italy which the unlearned and unbelieving think good to speak of as "dead." If they are dead, bury them; or at least leave them as a matter of curious study for those whose tastes may lead their studies in that direction. It is surely because they are not dead, because they are the most living and practical of all tongues, that we hold that they must still abide, as the foundation, as the corner-stone, as the crowning of the edifice, as the centre of all that is worthy of the name of culture or liberal education. But we make our ground less strong than we should make it, we leave our fortress more open to the assaults of ignorance, if we part the elder from the younger, if we part the parent from the children, if we fail to proclaim that our knowledge of any language is imperfect, unless we know both whence words come and whither they go. "Ancient languages," "modern languages," Latin to be learned with no regard to its later fruit of French—French to be learned without regard to

its parent stock of Latin—such a cruel severing as this is indeed to betray one of our strongest outworks into the hands of the besiegers. If the sixteenth century made such a severance, it was neither wonderful nor blameworthy; but it is blameworthy indeed if we keep it on in the fuller light of the nineteenth. And as with language, so with political history. We shall never be able to make such answer as we ought to make to cavils about "small states," about "battles fought two thousand years ago," unless we boldly write on our banner the golden words of Arnold, to which I have referred already, when he speaks of "what is falsely called ancient history, the really modern history of Greece and Rome." One might think that the Roman Empire was big enough even for a declaimer against "petty states;" but we must take the cavillers on their own ground; we must proclaim aloud that the history of those small states of a far distant age is, as the history of small states of a far distant age, an essential part of the study of man's progress, without which

we shall never fully understand the workings of greater states in later times. We must proclaim that the real life of the history of those times lies not in its separation from the affairs of our own time, but in its close connexion with them. But this we cannot do in its fulness as long as we part asunder periods of history each of which loses half its value if it is looked at apart from the other. We cannot make our full defence as long as we condemn so-called "ancient" and so-called "modern" history to be taken up in distinct schools as wholly unconnected subjects, to be taught and lectured on by teachers and professors who stand in no kind of relation to one another. If we wish to keep our "ancient" history, our "ancient" languages, as an essential part of any sound and liberal teaching, we can do it only by letting the gainsayers know that the falsely called "ancient" studies are, as Arnold taught us forty years ago, the most truly "modern" of all.

To me then the very title of a Professor of

"Modern" History is in itself a fetter. It is be sure made one degree less hard to bear because no attempt is made to define "modern" history, because it doubtless has been felt that it was impossible to define it. There is indeed one definition of "modern" history which I would gladly accept; there is one point at which I would even be content to draw a hard and fast line between "ancient" and "modern." That point is one which is not quite so near to our own day as the French Revolution nor yet quite so far from it as the Call of Abraham. We may well agree to draw a line between "ancient" and "modern," if we hold our "modern" period to begin with the first beginnings of the recorded history of Aryan Europe, whether we place those beginnings at the first Olympiad or carry them back to any earlier time. There alone can we find a real starting-point; a line drawn at any later time is a mere artificial and unnatural break. It is then that for us, for the nations of Europe of our own day, the story of ourselves and of our

kinsfolk begins. It is the beginning of our political being; it is the beginning of tongues kindred to our own, tongues which still happily form the groundwork of all our studies. Then begins that one great and unbroken drama which takes in the long political history of European man, the history of the Greek and the Italian, the history of the Celt, the Teuton, and the Slave. By "modern" history then I should understand our own history in the widest sense, as distinguished from certain branches of history which are older than our own, and from certain other branches which, though contemporary with our own, are not our own. We, students of modern history, of the European history of perhaps the last seven-and-twenty centuries, should be among the first to welcome the vast additions which our own days have made to the knowledge of history which is truly ancient, of languages which are truly dead. While we claim the records of Athenian archons and Roman consuls as essentially parts of the same tale as the records of Venetian doges and English

kings, we welcome the recovered records of the Accadian, the Assyrian, and the Hittite, as materials for a high and worthy study, but for a study which is not our own. The two studies are closely connected; each may give good help to the other; but Accadian history is helpful to English history, not as Latin or Hellenic history is helpful, but as anthropology, as palæontology, as geology—studies all of them which deserve plain Teutonic names—are constantly found helpful. All these are helpful, indeed there is hardly any branch of knowledge which is not helpful to the true historian; but they are helpful as distinct, though kindred, studies, not as parts of the same study. Beyond then the first beginnings of our "modern" history, there is a wide field of truly "ancient" history, of history which does not directly influence the political life of modern Europe, but which is fully worthy of its place as a separate branch of knowledge, with its distinct students, its distinct teachers. And we, students and teachers of the history of living Europe, must give a

welcome yet more brotherly to all that advances the knowledge of those branches of history which are still living, though not European. We do not fully understand the history of the lands and nations which are our own, unless we know at least their relations to the lands, the nations, the tongues, the creeds, which have supplied the men of Aryan Europe with their immediate neighbours and rivals. The tale of Greece, the tale of Italy, brings us at almost every page across the records of the Hebrew, the Phœnician, and the Arab. When in the palaces of Palermo we see the letters traced from right to left, traced at the bidding of Norman kings but by the hands of Saracenic craftsmen, when we see the sadder sight of legends in the same world-wide alphabet blotting out the mosaics of Justinian in the most glorious of Christian temples, we must indeed acknowledge that the teaching of Arabia has truly a history of its own, a history parallel to our own history, a history intertwined with our own history, but still distinct from it. Semitic

history, Arabian history above all, must have its distinct students and distinct teachers, yet it still is so closely connected with our own studies, that the votaries of either subject must at least know the main outlines of the other. The history of the Phœnician and the Arab and of those who have adopted the creed of the Arab, must be known as the history of mighty and abiding rivals, not as part of the history of our own home and of our own folk. For this last we can acknowledge but one boundary either in space or in time. It spreads wherever men have spread themselves who have been brought under the political, the moral, or the religious influence of Rome. For its beginning we may not seek at any time more recent than our first glimpses of Rome's own Hellenic teacher.

But in an imperfect world man must yield to circumstances. Vain and mischievous as is the distinction, yet as long as it is formally acknowledged in the University, as long as there are distinct schools, distinct professors, of "ancient"

and of "modern" history, and as long as the accepted sphere of the "ancient" professors takes in times much later than the first Olympiad, a professor of "modern" history must, if only under protest, try to put some meaning upon his qualifying adjective, and to chalk out for himself some special sphere which will not bring him into any open clashing with his "ancient" colleagues. And I think that a boundary may be drawn between us which, better at least than some others, may serve as a fair temporary shift till the whole arrangements of the University as to the teaching of history and language are thoroughly recast in accordance with the advance of modern knowledge. The fifth century of our æra, the period of the settlement of the Teutonic nations within the Empire, is one of the most marked periods in the history of the world. It is of equal importance with the earlier period which in some sort balances it, the second century before our æra. The earlier time ruled that Rome should be the head of Europe; it ruled what form

should be taken by her dominion; the later time ruled what form her abiding influence should take in days when her political power was cut short and in many of her western provinces broken in pieces. The division is of course open to the objection that, in any philosophical view of the course of events, the age which saw the first sack of Carthage and the age which saw the first sack of Rome answer to one another and cannot be parted asunder. That strong objections may be taken to this as to any other point of division is indeed the essence of my whole case; but, if a distinction must be drawn at some point, the point at which I propose to draw it seems open to fewer objections than most others. It is a real starting-point; it is the time that saw the planting of the germs of the great nations of Western Europe, the age which saw the settlement of the Goth in Spain, of the Burgundian and the Frank in Gaul, of the Angle and the Saxon in Britain. I may admit a secondary sense in which that age may be called the beginning of "modern" history,

if only it is allowed that "ancient" history goes on alongside of it for a thousand years. That thousand years the professors of the two divisions will have in common, but they will look at them from different points of view. The "ancient" professor will look at them with the eyes of one whose home is fixed within the walls, first of the elder and then of the younger Rome. His "modern" colleague will look at it with the eyes of the younger nations, who have found themselves dwellings on Roman soil, who in becoming conquerors have become disciples, who deem it their highest boast to deck their princes with the ensigns and the titles of the power whose political greatness they have overthrown. In other words, a Professor of Modern History, while he protests against the name, will still have a definite and intelligible function if he be understood to be a professor of the history of the Teutonic and Slavonic nations. He will do well to fix his ordinary limit at the point when Teutonic wandering changes into Teutonic settlement. Yet he may

be forgiven if he is sometimes tempted to look back with yearning to that great day in the history of our race, in the history of the whole world, when it was ruled by the Teutoburg wood that there should be a free Germany to plant a free England and a free England to plant a free America. Nay, he may even sometimes cast a backward glance to that premature wandering of our kinsfolk which was checked by the arm of the yeoman of Arpinum, when the eagle of Rome, the eagle of Marius, first spread her wings over the field of Aquæ Sextiæ. All that is purely Greek, all that is purely Roman, he will school himself to forego; the historian of Teutonic nations and Teutonic laws cannot afford wholly to shut up his Tacitus, his Strabo, and his Cæsar; but he must turn away, with however heavy a heart, from the widest and deepest teaching that ever came from the pen of one who set down the records of deeds in which he himself had played his part. To his "ancient" colleague he must give up the man of varied experience and

varied thought, the man who looked at his own age with the eyes of an historian of all ages, the man who bore the urn of Philopoimên and who stood beside the flames of Carthage, Polybios surveyor and teacher of the world.

And now for a word as to the immediate choice and treatment of subjects and texts among all that fill the ages since the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet was heard within the Salarian gate. Till our whole system is recast, the best thing that can be done for sound learning in the department in which I am called to give my help will be to fix as far as may be the energies of those who devote themselves to the so-called "modern" school on those periods which can be treated most nearly after the sound fashion of the old school of *Literæ Humaniores*. That school did not make a man a philosopher, a philologer, or an historian, but it gave him the best possible start towards making himself any one of the three. In my long past character of Examiner in the School of Modern History

I always noticed the great advantage enjoyed by those who had gone through the discipline of the elder school, not merely in the amount of knowledge that they brought with them, but in the habits of mind which they had gained, habits which enabled them to do justice to later periods as well as to earlier. Among the fourteen centuries which we have just taken as our special heritage, some times adapt themselves far better than others to the acquisition of sound and scholar-like habits of thought and judgement. I can conceive nothing more utterly opposed to sound learning, nothing which more thoroughly deserves the name of building without a foundation, than the fashion of rushing off at once to the most recent times, to controversial times, to times for which the original authorities are so endless that, for ordinary University study, it comes to the same thing as having no original authorities at all. For it is quite certain that in nearly every case the professed study of very modern times will mean something other than the real and thorough

study of original authorities. The last recorded event in the newspapers is indeed part of the history of the world. It may be, and it should be, studied in a truly historic spirit. We who have seen the union of Germany and Italy, who have seen the new birth of the nations of south-eastern Europe, have lived in an age almost as rich in great events and great changes as the age of Polybios or the age of Procopius. Only there is this objection to making our own age a direct subject of University study that there is as yet no Polybios or Procopius in whom to study it. Indeed the whole range of the last two or three centuries of European history is surely far better suited for private study, for the wider professorial teaching, than it is to be made a direct subject of enforced work to be tested by examination. Knowledge of those times may well be no less solid in itself than knowledge of any earlier time; but solid knowledge of them is not likely to be reached early in life, nor can it be so easily tested by examination as know-

ledge of earlier times. The excessive devotion to very modern periods which seems to have set in within the last ten years or so seems to me to be an evil in every way. It widens the partition which it should be our first work to break down; it is more likely than the study of earlier times to gender to shallowness and mere talk; it savours of the notion which was afloat a generation back that it was well to bring in "modern" history as an "easier" study than the severe labours of the elder school. As far as I may have any influence, official or personal, that influence will be given to attempting to show that "modern" history is at least no more easy than "ancient." I shall do all that in me lies to discourage the delusive study of what are called "subjects" and "periods," and to do all that one man can do to bring back the sound and old-fashioned study of "books." The first foundation of learning is the mastery of original texts. That must come first; there is much for the student himself, much

for the tutor and the professor, to add in the way of comment and illustration and comparison of text with text. But knowledge of a man's books is the beginning, the foundation, the absolutely needful thing, without which all the rest is vanity. The great difficulty is to persuade people that there really are original authorities for what are called "mediæval" times, exactly in the same way that it is allowed that there are original authorities for what are called "classical" times. I remember well how hard a saying this seemed in the days when "modern" history was brought in as something which might be learned in modern English and French books that were pleasant to read, and needed no painful mastery of writings in the Greek and Latin tongues—the yet more terrible Old-French and Old-English were as yet hardly thought of. By this time some at least have found out that both Western and Eastern Europe can show no lack of original writers for the history of days since the fifth century, writers who in their way deserve as much to be studied

as the original authorities of earlier days. By this time it may not sound wholly a paradox to say that the two cannot be studied so profitably as when they are studied side by side, that the mind is far more widened, that the historic judgement is far more strengthened, by the study of the two side by side than by the study of either singly.

It is now high time that I should tell you in what way I propose to carry on the work which I have this day begun, what shape I mean to give to my first official contribution to historical learning. My notion is, if I find support enough in the University to carry out the scheme, to keep going, through at least part of the year, two distinct courses of lectures of different kinds. One course may well consist of lectures of a more general kind, written or spoken, lectures which I venture to hope may be interesting and profitable even to those who have not specially given themselves to minute historical study. Alongside of these I hope I may find encouragement enough

to enable me to carry on courses of lectures of a more minute kind on the texts of original writers. These will be for special students of history, and to them I would bid any, of whatever standing, who may be willing to try whether it is not possible to work in the same solid and thorough way at a writer in the Greek or Latin of a later age as it confessedly is to work at writers in the earlier forms of the same tongues. In the present term I propose, for the more general course, to give a series of lectures on the methods of historical study; in another term I hope to follow this up with a general course on the great periods of history. After these introductory courses I trust to go on with others of a more special kind on the history of our own land, of the Empire in East and West, of Sicily, of any other part of our great subject which may be found expedient. As the first stage in the more minute series, I propose to begin during the present term with the Frankish History of Gregory of Tours. He is, I find, the earliest writer recom-

mended for candidates in the School of Modern History. I fear that he is not one of those who are most commonly taken up. I was tempted to begin with some earlier writers, with some who not only recorded the events of the fifth century, but who actually lived in it. Above all, I was tempted to begin with Sidonius Apollinaris, courtier, bishop panegyrist, and saint. But the writings of Sidonius, precious as they are as illustrations of history are not themselves in strictness historical writings And if we are to make any distinction, even under protest, we must reckon the purely Roman Sidonius among the latest of ancient writers, while Gregory, not Frankish certainly, but yet not wholly Roman, may be fairly looked on as opening the mediæval series. With him then I will begin. I choose him for his own sake, and I choose him for a further motive. When we have well seen what the Frankish Conquest of Gaul was, we shall be better able to understand by contrast the true nature of the English Conquest of Britain.

I have chalked out a scheme for the steady

work of at least a year. How and how far that scheme can be carried out depends partly on the Professor himself, partly on the University at large. My object will be gained, my reward will be won, if I can succeed in bringing any considerable number of members of the University, of whatever standing, to join with me in the study of those ages which begin with the settlement of our own and of kindred races in the lands which some of them still hold, as a subject no less worthy than the study of the ages that went before them, as a study which cannot be worthily followed if it is kept wholly apart from the study of the ages which went before them. To fellowship with me in that attempt I bid any who feel a call to learning as an object to be sought for its own sake and who feel a special call to research in that particular branch of learning. But remember that it is to the pursuit of learning for its own sake that I would call them. I call them to the pursuit of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, to that learning which is said to be better than

house and land, but which perhaps is not the path best adapted for the winning of houses and lands. And if it is better than house and land, it is also, I presume, better than classes and fellowships, though I presume also that it will be found to be at least not a hindrance to the winning of classes and fellowships. I only give the warning that my work here will have no immediate reference to the winning of classes and fellowships. I am put here to do what can be done by one man who cannot have many years to do it in, for the promotion of historic truth for its own sake. Or, if there is any object beyond, higher than, the search after truth for its own sake, it will be the hope that our studies of the past may be found to have after all their use in the living present, that we may at least not play our part the worse in the public life of our own day if we carry about us a clear knowledge of those earlier forms of public life out of which our own has grown. We shall surely not be the less at home in our own generation, if we bear in mind that we are the heirs and scholars of

the generations that went before us, if we now and then stop in our own course to thank the memory of those without whom our own course could not have been run, if we are ready, at every fitting moment, to "praise famous men and our fathers that begat us."

Printed at the University Press, Oxford
By HORACE HART, *Printer to the University*

00098054

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 05 October, 2018